

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the present application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, the Examiner first objected to Claims 3 and 4 as indicating improper dependencies. Applicants, in response, have canceled Claims 1-8 thereby obviating these claim objections.

Further in the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 1-8, 10, 11 and 14-17 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being allegedly anticipated by Meilunas et al. US Patent No. 6,215,851 ("Meilunas").

The Examiner further rejected Claims 22-24 and 27 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Sredniawski US Patent No. 5,784,430 ("Sredniawski") in view of Meilunas.

The Examiner further objected to Claims 9, 12 and 13 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but indicated that these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The Examiner did indicate, and is respectfully thanked for such indication, that Claims 18-21 and Claims 25-26 presented allowable subject matter.


With respect to the objection of Claims 9, 12 and 13, Claim 8 is being canceled and the subject matter wholly incorporated in Claim 9 now re-cast in independent form. As Claim 9 was indicated as presenting allowable subject matter, the Examiner is respectfully requested to allow Claim 9, and each of Claims 12 and 13 also indicated as being allowable. Claims 10-12 are being further amended herein to correct their dependencies in view of the cancellation of Claim 8.

With respect to the Examiner's rejection of Claims 14-17 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Meilunas, applicants cancel these claims without prejudice.

Furthermore, Claim 27 is being amended to correct an informality regarding its dependency. Specifically, Claim 27 is being amended to depend upon Claim 25 indicated as allowable.

In view of the foregoing remarks herein, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that this application be allowed and a Notice of Allowance be issued. If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference with the Applicants' attorneys would be advantageous to the disposition of this case, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned, Applicants' attorney, at the following telephone number: (516) 742-4343.

Respectfully submitted,



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